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Medical knowledge and the improvement of vernacular languages in the Habsburg Monarchy: A case study from Transylvania (1770–1830)

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ABSTRACT

In all European countries, the eighteenth century was characterised by efforts to improve the vernaculars. The Transylvanian case study shows how both codified medical language and ordinary language were constructed and enriched by a large number of medical books and brochures. The publication of medical literature in Central European vernacular languages in order to popularise new medical knowledge was a comprehensive programme, designed on the one hand by intellectual, political and religious elites who urged the improvement of the fatherland and the promotion of the common good by perfecting the arts and sciences. On the other hand, the imperial administration's initiatives affected local forms of medical knowledge and the construction of vernacular languages. In the eighteenth century, the construction of vernacular languages in the Habsburg Monarchy took on a significant political character. However, in the process of building of the scientific and medical vocabulary, the main preoccupation was precision, clarity and accessibility of the neologisms being invented to encompass the medical phenomena being described. In spite of political conflicts among the 'nations' living in Transylvania, physicians borrowed words from German, Hungarian and Romanian. Thus they elevated several words used in everyday language to the upper social stratum of language use, leading to the invention of new terms to describe particular medical practices or phenomena.

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'In my country people praise the knowledge of their mother tongue.'

Joseph von Sonnenfels (1761)

1. Introduction

The effort to build a centralised medical administration and a network of medical schools in all provinces of the Monarchy fuelled an initiative to assure a uniform medical education. This enterprise was reflected in a programme that supported the writing and translation of medical (text)books, in all languages spoken in the Monarchy, destined for the training of the lower echelons of medical practitioners (surgeons, midwives and apothecaries). Viennese physicians associated with a central medical bureaucracy

took the lead in publishing new medical works and textbooks. These had links either to the University of Vienna or to the Josephine Academy of Surgeons. This intellectual and educational enterprise was due to the fact that in many of the Monarchy's spoken languages, there were no adequate terms to communicate recent improvements, especially new medical knowledge, in an intelligible manner. The cultivation of language in the eighteenth century was therefore regarded as a tool for overall improvement.

In his work on languages, [Peter Burke \(2004\)](#) has stressed the complexities and challenges posed for historians and linguists by a region inhabited by different ethnic groups speaking different languages. [Robert J. W. Evans \(2004\)](#) emphasizes even more that the Habsburg lands were renowned as the *locus classicus* of a polity whose ethnicities were notably marked by a multitude of divergent languages. In Transylvania, a small province of the Empire which had a complex ethnic, social, and linguistic character, there

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were four main languages in everyday usage: Latin, Hungarian, German and Romanian. Each one of them was primarily spoken by one of the four ethnic groups including Hungarians, Székely, Saxons and Romanians. Even Church Slavonic was preserved in the Greek Orthodox confession professed by most Romanians. Latin was the dominant language of scholarship and administration until 1820.¹

Several treatises concerning the history of language use in the Habsburg Empire have been published, predominantly by Romanian, Hungarian and German literary historians, linguists and historians. The works of L. Benkő (1960) and Benkő and Imre (1972), G. Bárczi (1963), G. Bárczi (2001), Adrian Marino (1964a,b), Domokos Kosáry (1983, 1987), Nicolae Bocșan (1986), and others have presented the cultivation of language as a means of communication and nation-building. Klaus Bochmann (1979), analysing social and political vocabularies, has pointed out that the shaping of the Romanian language followed the elites' political agenda of obtaining either independence from Ottoman rule (Moldova and Wallachia) or political rights in Transylvania. Nicolae A. Ursu (1962) was among the few linguists to concern themselves with the formation of scientific terminology in Romanian. However, he abandoned this research in the 1970s, following the publication of a book and of a couple of articles analysing the scientific terms used by the representatives of the Romanian Enlightenment in Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia. The initiator of the study of medical terminology in Romanian was the medical historian, Valeriu L. Bologa (1924–1926). He was followed by Gheorghe Brătescu (1983), and József Spielmann (1980) who numbered among the medical historians from Romania who have noted the importance of building a new Romanian medical vocabulary. However, they never discussed this linguistic phenomenon in its manifestation in the publications of Hungarians and Saxons in Transylvania and the kingdom of Hungary.

The issue of the German language as a medium for transmitting ideas within the Habsburg Monarchy is prevalent in many Austrian, Slovak and Hungarian articles. Eva Kowlaská (2007) has studied the way in which Slovaks accepted the Czech language in the eighteenth century as a means of preserving their Lutheran confessional identity, which was threatened by the Catholic Counter-Reformation promoted by Habsburgs. Recently, Ferenc Bíró (2010) has analysed the problems raised by the creation of the Hungarian language, and the role played by Ferenc Kazinczy in the development of the Hungarian language and identity by the first generation of representatives of the Enlightenment in the climate created by the Josephinian reforms in the 1780s. Furthermore, in her Ph.D. research, Eszter Tarsoly (2007) discusses attitudes towards language and the myth of linguistic purity in Hungary. A more compressive analysis of languages in East Central Europe has been done by Tomasz Kamusella (2009) and Alexander Maxwell (2009), who have underlined the role of languages in fashioning national identity in the nineteenth century. Mitchell Ash (2009) has argued that the nineteenth-century language represented a formative category for both science and nationalism, and emphasises the differences between the ideologies of nobles and enlightened elites in the 1790s.

The cultivation of the mother tongue and linguistic neologisms are thus not merely literary or cultural issues, but relate to the production and efficient circulation of practical or technical, including scientific, knowledge, and thus ultimately arise out of a programme central to local enlightened elites. In the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Habsburg context, this process has received inadequate attention from an empirical standpoint. To date, the focus of historians has been on the nineteenth century,

a time when nationalist tensions were being stirred up by the 1848 Revolutions. By contrast, my work draws on eighteenth-century medical and natural history books written in Latin, German and Hungarian and translated into German, Hungarian and Romanian, accounts of the physicians and the physicians' own writings and correspondence, as well as historical accounts discussing physicians' work, journal articles, calendars and almanacs, all of which contributed to building a modern 'medical vocabulary'. The cultivation of language was a central concern in German, Hungarian and Romanian learned societies during the eighteenth century, among whose membership physicians played a leading role.

My paper will discuss the question of language usage among the social elite within Transylvania and the building of medical terminology in the vernacular. The opposition of Germans to the use of the Hungarian language and vice versa, ostensibly resolved through the neutral medium of Latin, in practice merely created a variety of new tensions caused not only by political circumstances but also by poor knowledge of classical languages. Seeking to implement reforms that would increase the number of healthy, happy, wealthy and educated members of the population, the Viennese Court supported the publication of a great variety books and pamphlets in all the vernacular languages of the Habsburg Monarchy. The publication of medical books and pamphlets was particularly strongly supported by both central (Habsburg) and local authorities. The books usually served as manuals in the newly-founded medical schools, helping to standardise medical education in the empire and generating new understandings of medicine in the provinces. The pamphlets permitted the dissemination of medical knowledge among burghers and peasants. Consequently, the centralisation of the Habsburg Monarchy not only affected political issues, but also local forms of medical knowledge and the construction of vernacular languages.

A second line of argument relies on the fact that, in the later eighteenth century, the construction of vernacular languages in the Habsburg Monarchy took on a significant political character. Both Hungarians and Romanians were under strong pressure from dominant foreign languages (German in the case of the Hungarians and German and Hungarian in the case of the Romanians). The need to build a vocabulary capable of conveying scientific meaning led physicians either to borrow new words, or to import a codified vocabulary from the vernacular language as spoken by peasants. The debate over the creation of a national language gave rise to dialogue and emulation as well as to political polemic among the Saxon, Hungarian and Romanian learned elites. On the other hand, the more practical aspects of medicine were not connected to national ideals, and reflected the knowledge and language that was most familiar to the physician who wrote or translated medical books. Physicians who had trained in German-language universities readily borrowed words from German, while priests who translated medical works borrowed words from Latin, due to the fact that this language was frequently used in (Greek-Catholic and Catholic) religious services, religious books, and medical, botanical and natural historical publications. Consequently, Hungarians borrowed most of their medical neologisms from Latin and Greek, while German was usually a second choice. Romanians were indebted to all four languages. They borrowed extensively from Latin and Greek as well as from Hungarian and German.

Another important aspect of language-building was the fact that, with few exceptions, the physicians who wrote or translated medical vocabularies and/or grammar books in the vernacular had only a minimal role in debates over complex linguistic problems, such as the relationship of their mother tongue to a certain group of languages. Their main preoccupation was precision, clarity and acces-

¹ Evans (2007).

sibility of the neologisms being invented to encompass the medical phenomena which were being described. Several words used in everyday language were elevated to the upper social stratum of language use, leading to the invention of new terms to describe particular medical practices or phenomena. An analysis of the medical literature written by Saxon, Hungarian and Romanian physicians will show the way in which medical languages were shaped and constructed. Due to Transylvania's close cultural, political and ethnical relationship with the kingdom of Hungary, some examples are also taken from the works of physicians who lived there.

2. The great principality of Transylvania: social structure and spoken languages

Transylvania was a province of the Habsburg Monarchy, situated in its south-eastern part, ruled by a governor appointed by the Habsburg Emperor either among army generals or among local Saxon and Hungarian elites. The population varied between 1,445,000 at the end of the eighteenth century and 2,300,000 around 1848.² Political power belonged to the Transylvanian Estates, represented by the Hungarian nobility, the Székely and the Saxons. The Estates were traditionally privileged groups with power and influence in socio-economic and political life, organised according to certain ethnic criteria. Ethnically, the province was populated by Hungarians, Saxons, Székely and Romanians.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the relations between the Viennese Court and a few of the nationalities within the empire, especially the Hungarian nobility, were strained by the implementation of Maria Theresia's taxation policy and Joseph II's administrative reforms. Both suspended the local elites' governing bodies (the Diet) and ruled by issuing ordinances which were sent to all the provinces. In 1784, Joseph II's decision to impose German as the language of administration within the Monarchy (except the Belgian and Italian provinces) met with disapproval. Military conscriptions and a 1785 decree to reorganize the Transylvanian Principality into eleven districts, destroying the medieval organisation and privileges, added to the tension. The strongest opposition manifested by the Transylvanian and Hungarian estates was to this language decree, and they devised a program of language improvement aimed at reforming and properly defining the vernaculars in order to serve not only communicative and administrative needs within the Empire, but also literary, scientific and philosophical endeavours.

In the 1790s, both privileged (Hungarian, Székely and Saxon) and unprivileged (Romanian) subjects started to contest the political and linguistic status quo. The death of Joseph II and the first meeting of the Transylvanian estates (the Diet) in 1791 after some decades of suspension was followed by a *restitutio ad integrum*: a cancellation of the entire body of administrative and linguistic reforms issued by Joseph II. The conflict between Habsburg authorities and the Hungarian political elites extended to local elites themselves. Not only the Saxons, whose old corporate rights and territorial privileges were denied, but also the Romanians were threatened by the developments in Hungarian politics. In a 1791 *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, the Romanians demanded recognition as the fourth nation of the principality, the acceptance of their religious faith, which was a mixture of Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic, and representation in the provincial Diet.³ The issue of the official language of the principality returned to the agenda of

the local estates during the meeting of the provincial Diet in 1791. Hungarians wanted to impose Hungarian as the official language in Transylvania, replacing Latin, the official language of administration and scholarship. This pitted the German-speaking Saxon and the Magyar-speaking Hungarian and Székely estates against one other. The Saxons insisted that each *natio* would speak its own language. As Ziegler (1881) mentions, the usage of Latin, especially within the administrative and judiciary systems and even in colleges, came to be seen as a solution during this 'stressful time'.

Transylvanian towns were famous for their colleges (*collegium*) and Lutheran grammar schools, most of which were maintained by the Protestant or Catholic churches. The most prestigious college was The Academy in Cluj [Kolozsvár/Klausenburg/Claudiopolis], initially controlled by the Jesuits, which offered a classical education in Latin (Mainzer, 1890). As Lilla Krász's essay in this collection shows, many Hungarians and Saxons travelled to German and Dutch universities, especially Halle, Jena, Göttingen, Erlangen, Leiden and Utrecht, to undertake their studies. Here they formed an influential group of Protestant intellectuals.⁴

In order to diminish the influence of the Protestant universities, provide a training ground for civil servants and encourage loyalty toward the house of Habsburg, Maria Theresia and Joseph II created a network of universities throughout the Monarchy. The same agenda lay behind Gerard van Swieten's reforms of medical education in Vienna. During the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, many Transylvanian students attended this new network of medical faculties and lyceums within the Monarchy, especially those in Buda/Pest and Vienna. The cost of studying at the Monarchy's universities was sometimes subsidised by the emperor, provincial *Gubernia* or private foundations. The stipends attached to studying there, as well as the fact that university degrees were a guarantee of a place in the imperial administrative apparatus, rapidly made these universities as attractive as the famous German and Dutch universities.⁵

In the medical faculties of the Monarchy, Latin was the language of scholarship (Ferro, 1785). Natural historians, natural philosophers, theologians and physicians published doctoral dissertations in Latin, and most important medical works appeared in this language. István Mátyus (1786) mentioned that during the early modern period, Latin was commonly known as the 'deák nyelv' [students' language] in Hungarian, as even the Greek classics were read in the colleges and universities in Latin translation. Both universities and secondary schools, including colleges and gymnasia, provided a classical education with an emphasis on Latin language and literature.⁶ Moreover, in Transylvania and Hungary, Latin was considered a complementary language to Hungarian, and was used in daily life and official meetings by the learned, political, administrative and intellectual elites along with Hungarian and German.⁷

Tóth (2000, 2005) demonstrated that even though it was widely used, Latin was poorly known. The shift towards the vernacular and away from Latin needs to be assessed in relation to this poor knowledge of Latin among the elites. For example, in spite of the fact that literacy within the Saxon community was high and that numerous members of the elites attended university, Latin was not properly spoken either by peasants or by the urban elites, because of the widespread use of German by the Church and the county administration since the Reformation.

As Neustädter (1736–1806), the *protomedicus* of Transylvania, explained:

² Nicoară (2001).

³ Prodan (1967).

⁴ Teutsch (1880).

⁵ Khavanova (2001).

⁶ Mărza (2005).

⁷ Evans (2004); T. Kamusella (2009).

The main reason why I have written this book in German is because most [Transylvanian] surgeons do not understand Latin; had it been in Latin, it would only have been read by a few of them. By contrast, a German version will have a wider circulation, and it will only take a few hours to read it from cover to cover.⁸

Moreover, Johan Binder (1796) in his articles emphasised also discussed the differences between *Hochdeutsch* and the dialects (*Plattdeutsch*) spoken by Saxon peasants, who could hardly read the Catechism (Klein, 1959). The creation of 'national' languages was further favoured by the educational reforms initiated by Maria Theresia and completed by her sons Joseph II and Leopold II, and her nephew Francis I. These were the *Ratio Educationis* (1777) and the *Norma Regia* (1781). Although not upheld in practice, this legislation established compulsory primary schooling across the Monarchy. G. Mantan (1816) emphasised that the Habsburg emperors supported the foundation of numerous primary schools, theological seminaries and teacher training schools (*Preparandia*) which not only assured a classical education, but also promoted teaching in vernacular languages. The very idea of a universal primary education in the vernacular put Latin into the shade, and supported the formation of a middling stratum of learned persons who used their mother tongue.⁹

Because of the Habsburg influence, German was the second most widely-spoken language in the Principality. In 1791, at the first meeting of the *Erdélyi Magyar Nyelvmívelő Társaság* ('Transylvanian Society for the Cultivation of the Hungarian Language'), the Hungarian writer and essayist György Aranka (1737–1817) remarked that there were many noblemen who only spoke German 'because by that means they would be superior to other people.'¹⁰ Aranka's comment was an exaggeration. Anton de Marki (1810) mentions the petty rural gentry could speak both Hungarian and German well. Robert J. W. Evans (2007) has shown that all forty officials of the Transylvanian *Gubernium*, as well as Romanian Greek Catholic bishops and archdeacons, were fluent in Latin, Hungarian, German and Romanian. But within the constituency that is the main focus of this paper, many rural Hungarian and Romanian surgeons and midwives could barely speak either Latin or German.

Besides linguistic diversity *per se*, there was also a diversity of dialects within the same language. The different populations in the province, Saxons, Hungarians, Székely and Romanians, all had difficulties in understanding one other. That numerous dialects and differences existed within a single language was a result of the fact that Hungarians and Romanians inhabited territories which were divided among different states. Moreover, the Saxons were colonists originating from different parts of the Holy Roman Empire, who had been given their landholdings by Hungarian kings. They received large privileges and relative autonomy, which they retained until the 1780s, when Joseph II's economic, administrative, religious and linguistic reform programme led to the reorganization of the entire Principality. The reforms destroyed the medieval corporation of both Transylvanian Saxons and Magyar-speaking Székely. The mobility of these populations (Saxons, Hungarian, Székely and Romanians) was one reason for the huge linguistic differences within a single ethnic community living in the Habsburg Monarchy.

This linguistic diversity across the Monarchy as a whole determined the Habsburgs to issue their main decrees in Latin. For

example, the sanitary ordinances were all issued in Latin across the Empire. The most important sanitary law, the *Generale Normativum in Re sanitatis* (1770), enjoyed wide circulation in Latin among Hungarians, Székely and Romanians. There was also a German version, which was used in the German-speaking areas of the Monarchy as well as in the Saxon districts. In the last part of the eighteenth century, the main health ordinances issued by the Habsburg authorities and the Transylvanian *Gubernium*, as well as instructions for the surgeons, midwives, and pharmacists, were issued in Latin, followed by translations in Hungarian and German.¹¹ These translations, and the publication of the ordinances in Hungarian, German, and Romanian, the languages spoken in the province, were sponsored by the Habsburg authorities, in an effort to assure the proper implementation of health regulations throughout the Monarchy.

The overall picture from the realms of education, administration and justice is reflected in the domain of medicine. For example, one main problem in the Principality was to determine whether German or Hungarian should be the official language of instruction of the surgeons and midwives at the Surgical Lyceum in Cluj. A fierce debate started between the Hungarians and Joseph Laffer (1741–1798), the first professor of anatomy and midwifery at the Surgical Lyceum. Most Saxon, Székely, Hungarian and Romanian surgeons and midwives of modest social origin, like well-to-do peasants or town-dwellers, could only speak their mother tongue, and only barely spoke German or a second language. For this reason, Laffer, who was educated in Vienna and lectured exclusively in German, was unable to instruct all of them.¹² Johan Winkler, the rector of the Cluj Academy, recognised the legitimacy of the Hungarians' requests for courses taught in Hungarian, but he could not dismiss Laffer's merits. For the sake of the Saxon *natio*, Laffer retained his chair, teaching in German, and a Hungarian assistant was appointed to teach Hungarian and Romanian surgeons and midwives.¹³ After the appointment in 1790 of a Romanian professor of ophthalmology, bilingual or possibly even trilingual courses were held at the Surgical Lyceum, thus inaugurating one of the first 'multicultural schools' in the Monarchy.¹⁴

3. Medical publications and the construction of vernacular languages in Transylvania

The founding of Medical Faculties and surgical schools, and the publication of textbooks and manuals as a result of van Swieten's program for a unified medical education throughout the Monarchy, exposed the poverty of the vernacular languages spoken in the Monarchy for medical purposes. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, the preoccupation of Romanian and Hungarian writers and translators of medical literature was the elevation of the everyday language of the people to the level of a codified or literary language.

The neologist movement in the second half of the eighteenth century Hungary, led by Ferencz Kazinczy (1759–1831), had the greatest contribution to the construction of Hungarian language. According to László Kontler (2002), around ten thousand new words, most of them still in use today, gave the Hungarian language the capacity to be used to communicate all kinds of facts, including scientific and medical knowledge.

⁸ Neustädter (1797).

⁹ Bocşan (1986); Mărza (2005).

¹⁰ Elemér (1955); Kamusella (2009).

¹¹ *Generale Normativum in Re Sanitatis* (1770).

¹² Romanian State Archive, Cluj branch, Fond 'Primăria Oraşului Bistriţa', seria II A, 1778, f. 34 r.-v.; Hungarian State Archives Budapest (MOL), Gubernium Transylvaniae in Politicis. Acta Generalia 10235/1790, f. 9; 13.

¹³ Spielmann–Szökefalvi-Nagy (1967); Spielmann (1980).

¹⁴ Ioan Lupaş (1938–39); Culcer (1966).

Only a few physicians were preoccupied with the study of linguistics *per se*. Influenced by the historical linguistics promoted by the Hungarian Jesuit linguist János Sajnovics (1733–1785), the physician Sámuel Gyarmathi (1751–1830) took on the task of further studying the possible relations between Hungarian, Sámi, Finnish and other languages spoken in the Ural Mountains region of His.¹⁵ Although it opposed the generally accepted theory that Hungarians originated in Scythia, Gyarmathi's book *Affinitas linguae hvngaricae cum lingvis fennicae originis grammatica demonstrata. Nec non vocabularia dialectorum tataricarum et slavicarum cum hungarica comparata* ('Grammar proofs of the similarity of the Hungarian language with the with the languages of Phoenician origins. The comparison of the vocabulary from the Tatar, Slavic and Hungarian languages') published in Göttingen in 1799 is considered a landmark in the field. Gyarmathi's methodological innovations, especially his grammatical and lexical comparisons, further demonstrated the Finno-Ugrian linguistic kinship of the Hungarians.¹⁶ Unlike Gyarmathi, the other physicians in the Principality engaged in constructing vernacular languages had a more practical purpose: a language was needed to instruct medical practitioners. The clarity of terminology required for translations and for teaching superseded nationalist struggles. The building of neologisms was only resorted to when the spoken vernacular did not have the right words to express particular medical concepts.

The prefaces of medical books reveal the main motives behind their publication. Beside government commissions and material incentives, there was a desire to educate, to impart knowledge, and to build a happy, healthy, and moral man. This utilitarian ethos, characteristic of the Enlightenment, underpins the numerous translations and the publication of medical books in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Most of these medical books were published either in Latin or in German. They utilised a medical vocabulary and language which had no correlate in several of the vernaculars spoken in the provinces of the Empire where they were used and read.

The physicians who translated or wrote medical books thus faced a serious shortage of words in the vernacular languages of the Empire with which to express medical terminology. The closing decades of the eighteenth century became a period of experimentation with vernacular languages, as grammatical structure and orthography were not fixed. The creation of adequate vocabularies was viewed as an indispensable part of disseminating medical knowledge. The physician István Mátyus talked about the Hungarian language of his day as originating in Scythia, and including loanwords from the people of Pannonia as well as from those peoples in cultural and commercial contact with Hungarians.¹⁷ In the preface of Mátyus' first volume of the *Ó és új Diaetetica* (1786) ('Old and New Dietetics'), the author also referred to the 'poverty' of the Hungarian language:

...we Hungarians, whose original language was used mainly for domestic activities and for farming, must use the students' language [Latin] in our daily conversation. . . Probably some people would consider it wrong to use as many words in the students' language [Latin] as I do, in among the Hungarian words. But even ancient Romans borrowed words from learned Greek, and educated noblemen were not ashamed to use many Greek words. . .¹⁸

In another work on dietetics the same author mentioned how '...some things are hard to express clearly and concisely in Hungarian, since the language has a poor vocabulary and lacks scientific

terms. The language [Hungarian] is not developed . . . therefore I have had to use Latin words which do not have a correlate in Hungarian. Where possible, I have used Hungarian words. . .'¹⁹

For his part, Mátyus preferred to construct the scientific terms by borrowing words from the classical languages. Latin was the language of scholarship. There were already numerous Latin loanwords in Hungarian, used in church rituals, the judiciary system, and the state administration. The majority of medical treatises and natural histories were in Latin, so that botanical and medical terms frequently had Latin roots (Benkő and Imre, 1972). In his writings, Mátyus extensively used words borrowed from Greek, including the terms *diagnózis* ('diagnosis'), *diétetika* ('dietetic'), *etiká* ('ethics'), *enthuziasmus* ('enthusiasm'), *hektika* (hectic), *mágia* ('magic'), *matézis* (mathematics), *patrióta* (patriot), *peripneumonia* (pneumonia), *protokollum* ('protocol'), *terápia* ('therapy'), *szofia* ('wisdom'). Mátyus, who did not agree with the practice of adopting neologisms from contemporary languages, favoured the borrowing from classical languages including Greek and Latin. However, he complained of being criticised for using Latin words, and for keeping several quotations in Latin in his dietetic works.

An important contribution to the building of scientific vocabulary came from the Transylvanian physician Károly Szeli (1748–1780), who argued that Hungarian was a rich and noble language.²⁰ Nonetheless, Szeli also faced a shortage of appropriate words for expressing medical terminology. In the preface to his translation of Steidle's book *Magyar Babamesterség iratott német nyelven Steidle János* ('The craft of midwifery') published in 1777, he supplied a table of relevant terms written in three languages, Hungarian, Latin and German. His solution to the neologism problem was to import words from spoken Hungarian into medical terminology. Few of the terms used in his translation of *Magyar Babamesterség* are still in use in scientific language today. Another strategy was to invent new terms by simply translating the Latin or German terms verbatim.

Hungarian	Latin	German	English
Medentze	Pelvis	Becken	Pelvis
A kereszt-tsontnak tsúpja	Protuberantia ossis sacri	Der Vorberg des heiligen Beins	
Tsipő-tsontok	Ossa iliaca	Die Darmbeine	Iliac bones
Szemérem-tsontok	Ossa pubis	Die Schaambeine	The pubic bones/ pubes
Far-tsik	Os cocczgis	Das Steissbein	Tail bone/ coccyx
Ülő-tsontok	Ossa ischii	Die Sitzbeine	Sit Bones/ ischium
Tsont-épület	Skeleton	Beingerüst	Skeleton
Nevetlen tsontok	Ossa innominata	Die ungenannten Beine	The hipbones
A méhnek kürtjei	Tubae uteri, seu Falopianae	Die Muttertrompeten	Ovarian Tubes/ fallopian tubes
A méhnek hüvelyje	Vagina uteri	Die Mutterscheide	Vagina
Tsikló nyelv	Clitoris	Schaamjünglein	Clitoris
Fogónó hely	Ovarium		Ovaries
Szüesség bőre	Hymen		Hymen
Mássa	Secundinae	Die Nachgeburt	Placenta
Fattyunehézkessé	Graviditas spuria	Falsche Schwangerschaft	False pregnancy
Méh fulladás	Passio Hysterica		Drowning womb
Bőr-test		Die lederne Frau Lederne Maschin	Skin of the body

¹⁵ Gyarmathi (1799).

¹⁶ Gyarmathi (1983).

¹⁷ Szlatky (1989).

¹⁸ Szlatky (1989), 10–11.

¹⁹ Mátyus (1786), VIII.

²⁰ Haën (1775).

The table above, published in Szeli's preface to his translation, shows that Szeli's invented terms, as well as many eighteenth-century German expressions for body parts or diseases, were not in use in contemporary scientific language. Here an example is 'A méhnek kürtjei', in German 'Muttertrompeten', in English 'Fallopian tubes'. To translate this into Hungarian, Szeli used the term employed by the peasants in daily practice, thus importing these terms into the upper social stratum of language use. Although viewed as archaic, some of the terms he used are still in the vocabulary to this day. In order to familiarise the readers with the new Hungarian medical vocabulary, Szeli provided the Latin or German translation. The whole book, as well as Szeli's translation of Anton von Haen's treatise on inoculation of 1777, has a bilingual medical terminology.

The same problems faced Sámuel Rác (1774–1807), who translated several textbooks written by Viennese professors into Hungarian, including one by Anton Störck (1731–1803),²¹ the dean of the Medical Faculty at the University of Vienna, and another by Joseph Jacob Plenck (1735–1807),²² a professor first at Buda/Pest University and later at Joseph II's Medical Academy for Surgeons, the Josephinum. Rác started his working life as the *physicus* of Baia Mare (Nagybánya) in the mining region of Maramureş, where he was in charge of health administration. His achievements in this post were rewarded by a professorship at the University of Buda/Pest. He taught courses for surgeons in Hungarian, while physicians were instructed in Latin. Rác was also confronted with the shortage of medical terminology in Hungarian. In the Hungarian text of the *Orvosi Tanítás*, he put German and Latin terms in brackets after the Hungarian medical terms that he considered to be less familiar. However, Rác was more creative than Szeli, his Transylvanian colleague. He 'played' with different Hungarian words to create a proper medical term out of the Latin and German counterparts. For example, in the same book he might use different Hungarian words as a translation for a single Latin term. He used the word 'pulse' in its Latin form, *pulsus*, its Hungarianized form, *pulsusz*, or else used the Hungarian word *érverése*. He also used both the Hungarian *forró* (hot) for diseases that have fever as a symptom and the Latin *febre* in describing the fevers and their classification. In addition, Rác (1778) also imported spoken Hungarian words into medical terminology, including *kórság* or *epilepsia* ('epilepsy'). For the Latin *symptomata*, he uses the expressions 'the history of the patient's disease' (*betegség története*) and 'the effects of the disease' (*a betegség esettyei*), and he calls surgery 'the surgeon's job' (*a borbély munkája*) an expression which appeared as *operatio* in Latin. Rác's most important contribution was to the building of anatomical vocabulary in Hungarian. While translating parts of Joseph Plenck's three-volume *Anfangsgründe der chirurgische Vorbereitungswissenschaft* ('Elements of surgical preparatory science', 1775–1776) into Hungarian, Rác compiled a Hungarian–Latin vocabulary of anatomical terms, which he used not only in the text but also in the table of contents, which doubled as a dictionary. The use of bilingual terminology aimed at enriching the Hungarian language with new medical and anatomical terms previously available only in Latin.

The poverty of the vernacular medical vocabulary was due to the fact that the medical education of many Transylvanian physicians occurred in Austrian, German and Dutch universities, where the language of teaching was Latin. The fact that Mátyus and Szeli had to borrow a word for 'dietetics' and even for 'therapy' shows how extensive the use of Latin was, not only in administration, but also in scientific and/or medical publications. The creation of an education in the 'national' languages spoken in the Principality required the development of a vernacular medical terminology.

Both Hungarians and Romanians preferred Latin and Greek as a source for loanwords. Some of the German anatomical terms were given in Latin during the eighteenth century. Only a few of them were mentioned by Szeli in his table, including *Ovarium*, and *Hymen*. Venereal disease and obstetrics were two fields in which Romanian physicians had to borrow extensively from the Latin in order to construct a medical terminology: *vas* (blood vessel), *perineu* (perineum), *laxative* (laxative), *licor* (potion) and other words were all lifted from Latin (Ursu, 1962). Thus, the introduction of neologisms served to name new disease categories, as well as defining anatomical parts which had not previously existed or were part of the peasant vocabulary. Some of these terms also defined new fundamental forms of standardised medical practice, such as measuring the pulse.

The Romanians had a preference for borrowing from Latin, which had a double connotation for them. On the one hand, this was the familiar form of medical terms, since all medical texts had previously been written in Latin. On the other hand, the use of Latin fulfilled a political goal. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, the Romanian learned elite, mainly comprising Greek Catholic bishops and archdeacons, such as Grigore Maior (1715–1785), Petru Maior (1760–1821), and Samuil Micu Klein (1745–1806), as well as historians and writers, such as Gheorghe Șincai (1754–1816), Anton de Marki, and the writer Ioan Budai-Deleanu (1760/3–1820), were engaged in a fierce polemic with German and Hungarian authors contesting the Roman origin of the Romanians. Romanian scholars wrote Romanian grammars and dictionaries, as well as histories of the Romanians, in order to demonstrate that the language they currently used was the *latina vulgata* spoken in the Roman province of Dacia, and thus that Romanians spoke Daco-Roman, a language known to contemporaries, as Romanian archdeacon Petru Maior (1976) argued:

...when Romanian children study Latin, they bring in an avalanche of Romanian words during the first year, because they are so similar to Latin words. In a similar way, when the old Hungarians who know both languages, Latin and Romanian, speak Latin, they use many Romanian words without realising it, believing that they are speaking Latin.

This polemic reveals the emergence of a national identity among the Romanians; this linguistic debate endowed the *natio valachica* with an ethnic significance (Hitchins, 2002). The first Romanian grammar and dictionary were written in Latin by the Greek Catholic Bishop Grigore Maior. The book circulated in a manuscript form until it was replaced by another grammar written by one of the bishop's pupils, Gheorghe Gabriel Șincai (Gherman, 2004). Both Maior's and Șincai's grammars were written in Latin and explained Romanian as a Latin language, using structural rather than lexical arguments (Sinkai, 1780).

Other authors who supported the Daco-Roman origin of the Romanians were Samuel Micu Klein and Petru Maior. They were also Greek Catholic archdeacons and employees of the Royal University Press in Buda. One of their main tasks was to translate a large variety of books into Romanian. The two authors and translators faced an even greater poverty of words to express concepts in medicine and natural history than their Hungarian colleagues. Initially, Petru Maior borrowed words from the Aromanian, a Romanian dialect from south of the Danube, but later he preferred Latin and Italian words in order to conceptualise scientific terms they encountered.²³ The shift has a political nuance, since the similarity between Aromanian and Romanian dialects would have supported the theory, promoted by the works of the famous Göttingen

²¹ Störck (1778).

²² Plenck (1782).

²³ Ursu (1961).

scholar August Ludwig Schlözer (1735–1809) and others in German academic circles, that Romanians had a Slavic rather than Roman origin. The migration of Romanians from south to north of the Danube would also have cast doubt on the claim to noble Roman origin and the continuity of habitation of the territory of Dacia. Such apparently minor historical points had a profound political significance; for to attribute a Slavic origin to the Romanians was to undermine the historical case for Romanian demands for political rights being made in the 1791 petition filled by Romanian intellectuals from the Monarchy entitled *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*.²⁴

The translation of medical literature also contributed to the development of the Romanian language, thanks to the importation into the spoken language of several Latin words previously used only in literary works. Language was a powerful political tool, and the choice of language from which to borrow that physicians made when writing on medical subjects expressed a range of political claims and allegiances, such as demonstrating the Roman origins of the Romanians, or defining the Hungarian language in contradistinction to the German influences upon it, and replacing the Saxon dialects with *Hochdeutsch*.

Many Hungarian nobles and scholars, including Péter Bod (1712–1769), György Aranka and others, were troubled by the deterioration of the Hungarian language resulting from the use of German in public affairs. They advocated the use of Hungarian for education, public affairs and at meetings of the provincial Diet. In the 1791 Diet, the Saxons strongly opposed the use of Hungarian. One of their reasons for doing so was pragmatic: only a few could understand Hungarian and/or Latin. The Hungarians' response was: 'Go to Germany, then!'²⁵ On the other hand, the Saxon argument was cultural, inspired by the writings of the Göttingen scholar August Ludwig Schlözer (1795–1797), who claimed that to abandon German

would also terminate [the Hungarian] connection to Germany and German scholarship, which up to now, particularly since the Reformation, has been stable and continuous each and every year. It would turn the whole [Transylvanian] German nation into semi-barbarians; German industry, German commerce, [and] German refinement would perish. . . here too . . . if they were to amalgamate with a raw mass, but one which overpowered by sheer numbers. I am not speaking here of the noble part of the nations there—these are obviously on a par with the cultivated noble peoples of Europe. But who can deny the unmeasurable gap between a Hungarian, Slav, or Wallachian commoner, and a German one from the [same area]?²⁶

In spite of the social and political tensions generated by the use of vernacular languages, the building of a vernacular medical vocabulary was a pragmatic issue, with the aim of ensuring that clear medical information was conveyed by the new words. Both in his own book, *Beehive Economy* (1785), and in his translations of works on midwifery by Simon Zeller, the Romanian physician Ioan Piuariu-Molnar (1749–1815) borrowed 140 words which were not in the his native language (Spielmann, 1980). As Molnar (1785) explained,

I could not write [these books] in our language [Romanian] in a way that everybody could understand. In different regions the language is different. Because of the shortage of words, I looked [elsewhere] for help and borrowed from the other languages.

The translation into Romanian, by Simon Zeller, of an important medical book, *Lehrbuch der Geburtskunde* ('Handbook on Midwifery'), similarly led Piuariu-Molnar to complain that 'it is difficult to find Romanian words to match the German terminology. Therefore the 200 *forint* of remuneration for this translation are not enough.'²⁷ The lexical problems Piuariu-Molnar encountered in the labour of translation were the driving force behind his subsequent authorship of a Romanian grammar and Romanian-German dictionary. For several words used by the administration, as well as the names of certain common diseases, Piuariu-Molnar used Hungarian loanwords, such as *bolând-bolond* ('mad'), *franț-franc* ('syphilis'), and *altoi-altoj* ('vaccination').²⁸ In other cases, he borrowed from the German, as in his translations for *apothecariu*—Apotheker ('pharmacist'), *spiter*—Spitzer ('pharmacist'), *spital*—Spital ('hospital'), *tindene* ('tendons'), *felcer*—Feldscher ('surgeon'), *obstrucție*—Obstruktion ('obstruction'), *constipație*—Konstipation ('constipation') and many other similar terms.

As can be seen from these examples, Piuariu-Molnar's linguistic choices avoided the Latinist tendencies of Blaj scholars like Petru Maior and Gabriel Șincai. Piuariu-Molnar was also cautious with regard to all foreign words and neologisms, but he employed many Transylvanian words and expressions.²⁹ Most of the words he used were subsequently adopted by Hungarian physicians writing medical books, demonstrating that the creation of a medical vocabulary had little relationship with the Latinist political movement of the Romanians or the Hungarian fight against the German language.

Unlike the Greek Catholic authors, Piuariu-Molnar was more proficient in German and Hungarian than in Latin. The influence of German was visible in his dictionary. The Romanian orthography he used here was heavily influenced by German-Hungarian orthography, especially in the grouping of consonants and vowels to express certain Romanian sounds. In the first chapter of his dictionary, Piuariu-Molnar attempted to build a proper orthography for Romanian, and showed a preference for the Roman alphabet. However, because of the common usage of Church Slavonic by Romanians of the Greek Orthodox faith, Piuariu-Molnar also made use of the Cyrillic alphabet, so that each word in Romanian was rendered twice, once in Cyrillic characters and once in Roman characters. The same method was employed by other writers, such as the Saxon priest Andreas Clemens in his German-Romanian dictionary published in 1821 and the General Inspector of Bucovina's Schools, Anton de Marki (1759–1819). They were influenced by Piuariu-Molnar's construction of the Romanian language, not only as regards the semantics of the words, but also as regards orthography. Clemens (1821) used both Cyrillic and Roman lettering, expressing his preference for the Roman, while de Marki (1810) favoured the Cyrillic alphabet. de Marki (1810) was nevertheless a strong supporter of the Latin origin of the Romanians. He constantly reminded the readers of the Latin etymology of definite and indefinite articles, nouns and verbs, in order to underline the Latin roots of the Romanian language.

Italian orthography and language were also appropriated by Hungarian physicians. Ferenc Nyulas (1758–1808), the Hungarian *protomedicus* of Transylvania, joined the polemics around the simplification of Hungarian orthography initiated by Hungarian scholars.³⁰ He argued that some letter groups were not only too difficult for native Hungarian speakers but also for foreigners who wanted to learn Hungarian. Nyulas (1800) therefore proposed

²⁴ Hitchins (1980); Kamusella (2009).

²⁵ Ziegler (1881).

²⁶ Quoted in Török (2007).

²⁷ Bologa, Spielmann, & Szokefalvi Nagy (1970).

²⁸ Molnar (1788).

²⁹ Bologa (1924–1926).

³⁰ Kiss-Pusztai (2003).

several innovations that would simplify the orthography and the language mainly following the Italian practice of doubling certain consonants are doubled. He argued that:

Ly: should be replaced by **j**, for example *hej* instead of *hely* (place),

Y: in the middle would be omitted, for example *edennek* instead of *edénynek* (pots).

Here he took inspiration from Italian, where some consonants are doubled, to suggest similar reforms for Hungarian orthography, such as *vannak* instead of *vagynak* ('they are').

The third important change concerned prefixes:

ki-megyek, which he changed from *kimegyek* ('I am going out').

The complex problem of describing and analysing the Principality's mineral and spa waters posed yet another challenge for Saxon, Hungarian and Romanian physicians alike. The first Transylvanian vocabulary of chemical terms in Latin and German was published by Michael Neustädter in 1793, in the context of a discussion of the curative properties of waters from Borsec/Borszék. The article used a mixture of Latin and German terms, revealing the extensive usage of Latin instead of German terms for several chemical substances. In the case of medical terms, the root word for neologisms was often spoken German, whereas the etymology of several chemical terms used by Neustädter (1793) is Latin. Significant examples are '*Tinctura curcumae*', which he translated as '*Curcumatinktur*', and '*Sal Amoniacum*', which he translated as '*Salmiak*'. Saxon physicians preferred to take inspiration from German-language treatises, rather than construct new words borrowing from classical languages. Their main contribution was imposition of *Hochdeutsch* as the language used in the scholarly publications. Hungarians and Romanians, by contrast, were more inventive. Nyulas and other Hungarian physicians constructed new words by importing folk expressions into scientific terminology. As Nyulas (1800) claimed in his book on the subject, 'No dictionary will never be complete without scientific terminology.' The preface of his book on mineral waters has a five-page dictionary of complex Hungarian-Latin chemical terms. This vocabulary of words, which were either invented by Nyulas or introduced by him to the upper stratum of the Hungarian language, includes: '*Alap/Fundamentum*' ('base'), '*Alkotvány/Systema*' ('system'), '*Aránylat/Proportio*' ('proportion'), '*Ásványi lúgsó/Alcali minerali*' ('alkaline mineral salt'), '*Átalló/Diameter*' ('diameter'), '*Átaltetsző/Transparens*' ('transparency'), '*Birtos/Firmus*' ('solid'), '*Birtosság/Firmitas*' (firmness), '*Boncmester/Anatomus*' ('anatomist') and many others. Only a few of the words invented by Nyulas are still in use today, however. The terms for which he provided neologisms came from the two fields in which he specialised, mathematics and chemistry, thus showing the influence of Lavoisier upon the development of pharmaceutical terminology in Transylvania.

The borrowing of new words was linked to nationalistic discourses. The practice served, on the one hand, to define the identity and historical origins of the nation in question, and on the other hand, to attest the author's or translator's proficiency in a given language. Where an author frequently used German and/or Hungarian loanwords, their orthography reflected his intellectual *miliieu*. The most relevant examples are Ioan Piuariu Molnar, whose Romanian language showed German influences, as well as Grigore Maior, Samuel Micu and Gheorghe Șincai, whose grammars reflect the Latin and Italian education they had received as priests in Rome (*Propaganda Fide*) and in Vienna (Santa Barbara College). Piuariu-Molnar wrote his Romanian grammar and dictionary in German, and the orthography he proposed is Germanizing. The

issue of medical terminology and the practices of borrowing from other languages are thus an indicator of the intellectual background and the languages studied by these scholars. Those who had a classical education and were involved in contemporary cultural programmes preferred to borrow new words from Latin and Greek in order to describe new medical terms.

In cases where the target audience was the general public or barbers and midwives rather than a qualified medical personnel (surgeons or pharmacists), the medical terms used were less complex. Schoolteachers or priests who translated medical brochures or wrote short medical articles in almanacs used paraphrases rather than a specialist medical vocabulary. The aim was to be understood by a wider array of readers. Significant here are the prescriptions published in the 1773 calendar *Sănătatea de-a lungul anului* ('Health throughout the year'), or the religious sermons promoting vaccination. These publications were the most widespread form of support for the Habsburg court and the medical and clerical elite. The bishops themselves wrote sermons including *Îndemn pentru părinți pentru ultuire* ('Encouraging parents to accept vaccination') published in 1805.³¹

In the struggle to impose a particular language used in scholarly publication, Hungarians, Saxons and Romanians used both patriotic and pragmatic arguments. This patriotic rhetoric was expressed in every preface of the medical books published by physicians. Such works, whether originals or translations, also included discourses in support of the constitution of a national language and identity, and an expression of loyalty to the House of Habsburg and the local authorities who financed the publication of the books. The discourse of improvement was thus coupled with more pragmatic arguments, namely the importance of a healthy and wealthy population.

4. Conclusion

In all European countries, the eighteenth century was characterised by programmes for improving the vernacular. This general European tendency was emulated within the Habsburg Empire, which is renowned for its complex political, confessional and ethnic character. The Transylvanian case study undertaken here has shown how both codified medical language and everyday language were constructed and enriched by the many medical books and pamphlets published by the initiative of the Habsburg authorities and by private agents.

Such efforts contributed to the eradication of diseases by educating medical professionals on the one hand and the population on the other, with the help of medical publications. Numerous medical books, textbooks and articles in journals or almanacs were published either in German or Latin by German and Hungarian physicians working in the medical schools of the Monarchy. Such individuals represented the central medical bureaucracy, since the university medical faculties and Lyceums were part of the Habsburg health administration. These physicians utilised a language which had no correlate in the several vernaculars spoken in the provinces of the Empire where medical works were to be used and read. Thus, physicians turned to translating and original publication in the provincial vernaculars in a bid to facilitate the communication of central medical programmes to local inhabitants. Along with local priests, they became active agents in the recreation not only of a codified scientific and medical language but also of the spoken vernaculars.

The enrichment of vernaculars within the Habsburg Empire benefited from the comprehensive and centralised programme that aimed to improve public health through encouraging the

³¹ Brătescu (1983).

cultivation of the sciences and medicine implemented not only by the state (the Habsburg and local authorities) but also the local intellectual elite. Conversely, the communication of medical knowledge in the vernacular contributed to the construction of national languages in the region, due to the large number of books that were published, and the numerous neologisms their authors had to coin. Literature written in the language of the nationalities living in the monarchy contributed to a further differentiation of the ethnic groups living in Transylvania. It also helped support their arguments in their fight for political rights (as in the Romanian case). Thus, medical and natural historical literature both enriched the spoken language and helped to define national identity.

The new medical books were discussed and debated at meetings of provincial and metropolitan learned societies. Publication and translation were thus acts of sociability, providing an opportunity for collaboration and collegiality between intellectual elites divided in the political sphere by their divergent political and national interests. Physicians, as members of the learned elite, claimed that the cultivation of the arts and sciences, especially medicine, would increase the number and quality of the population. They would use their medical knowledge to fight diseases such as plague, smallpox, syphilis, scurvy and goitre, which crippled and handicapped people, transforming them into a burden for society. Moreover, given their perception of the Habsburg provinces as backward, trained physicians viewed the diffusion of medical knowledge as a way of ‘catching up’ with Western European countries. Medical pamphlets and books thus served to reform both literary and spoken languages, and enhanced the social status of physicians as well as the prestige of the nation as a whole.

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